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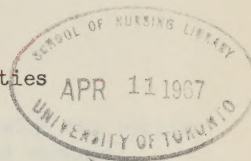
Department
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Labour

Women's Bureau Bulletin

Number XV

July 1965

The Recommendation Concerning
The Employment of Women with Family Responsibilities
adopted unanimously by
Forty-ninth Session
International Labour Conference



The text of the Recommendation

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,

Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met in its Forty-ninth Session on 2 June 1965, and

Noting the fact that in many countries women are working outside their homes in increasing numbers as an integral and essential part of the labour force, and

Noting further that many such women have special problems arising out of the need to reconcile their dual family and work responsibilities, and

Noting that many of these problems, though they have particular relevance to the opportunities for employment of women workers with family responsibilities, also confront other workers and can be substantially alleviated by measures affecting all workers, such as the progressive reduction of daily and weekly hours of work, and

Noting further that many of the special problems faced by women with family responsibilities are not problems peculiar to women workers but are problems of the family and of society as a whole, and

Recognising that continuous social adaptation is required to meet these problems in a manner consistent with the best interests of all concerned, and

Aware of the need for governments and for all public and private organisations concerned to give consideration to these problems in a broad social, economic and legal context, and

Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to the employment of women with family responsibilities, which is the fifth item on the agenda of the session, and

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of a Recommendation,

adopts this twenty-second day of June of the year one thousand nine hundred and sixty-five the following Recommendation, which may be cited as the Employment (Women with Family Responsibilities) Recommendation, 1965:

The Conference recommends that each Member should apply the following provisions as fully and as rapidly as national conditions allow:

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLE

1. The competent authorities should, in co-operation with the public and private organisations concerned, in particular employers' and workers' organisations, and in accordance with national and local needs and possibilities--

- (a) pursue an appropriate policy with a view to enabling women with family responsibilities who work outside their homes to exercise their right to do so without being subject to discrimination and in accordance with the principles laid down in the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958, as well as in other standards relating to women adopted by the International Labour Conference, and
- (b) encourage, facilitate or themselves undertake the development of services to enable women to fulfil their various responsibilities at home and at work harmoniously.

II. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

2. The competent authorities should, in co-operation with the public and private organisations concerned, in particular employers' and workers' organisations, take appropriate steps--

- (a) to encourage such consideration of the problems of women workers with family responsibilities as may be necessary to help these workers to become effectively integrated in the labour force on the basis of equal rights;
- (b) to undertake or promote such research as may be necessary and feasible into the various aspects of the employment of women workers with family responsibilities with a view to presenting objective information on which sound policies and measures may be based; and
- (c) to engender broader public understanding of the problems of these workers with a view to developing community policies and a climate of opinion conducive to helping them to meet their family and employment responsibilities.

It is desirable that these proposals shall take the form of a recommendation.

At the second day of the year 1940, the year was observed as the day of the following recommendation, which may be cited as the following recommendation (Recommendation, 1940).

Reference is made to the fact that each Member should apply the following policy and as rapidly as national conditions allow:

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLE

The competent authorities should, in co-operation with the public organizations concerned, in particular employers' and workers' organizations, and in accordance with national and local needs and possibilities:



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II. BUILD UPON THE BASIS OF KNOWLEDGE

The competent authorities should, in co-operation with the public organizations concerned, in particular employers' and workers' organizations, and in accordance with national and local needs and possibilities:

...and consideration of the problem of women workers with responsibilities as may be necessary to help these workers to effectively interested in the labour force on the basis of

...and on the basis of such research as may be necessary and feasible to the various aspects of the employment of women workers with responsibilities with a view to presenting objective information on which sound policies and measures may be based; and

...and broader public understanding of the problem of these women with a view to developing community policies and a climate of opinion conducive to helping them to meet their family and employment responsibilities.

III. CHILD-CARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

3. With a view to determining the scope and character of the child-care services and facilities needed to assist women workers to meet their employment and family responsibilities, the competent authorities should, in co-operation with the public and private organisations concerned, in particular employers' and workers' organisations, and within the scope of their resources for collecting information, take such measures as may be necessary and appropriate--

- (a) to collect and publish adequate statistics on the number of mothers engaged in or seeking employment and on the number and age of their children; and
- (b) to ascertain, through systematic surveys conducted more particularly in local communities, the needs and preferences for child-care arrangements organised outside the family.

4. The competent authorities should, in co-operation with the public and private organisations concerned, take appropriate steps to ensure that child-care services and facilities meet the needs and preferences so revealed; to this end they should, taking account of national and local circumstances and possibilities, in particular--

- (a) encourage and facilitate the establishment, particularly in local communities, of plans for the systematic development of child-care services and facilities; and
- (b) themselves organise as well as encourage and facilitate the provision of adequate and appropriate child-care services and facilities, at reasonable charge or free in case of need, developed along flexible lines and meeting the needs of children of different ages and of their working parents.

5. With a view to safeguarding the health and welfare of the child--

- (a) child-care services and facilities of all types should comply with standards laid down and supervised by the competent authorities;
- (b) such standards should prescribe in particular the equipment and hygienic requirements of the services and facilities provided and the number and qualifications of the staff; and
- (c) the competent authorities should provide or help to ensure the provision of adequate training at various levels for the personnel needed to staff child-care services and facilities.

6. The competent authorities should, with the co-operation and participation of the public and private organisations concerned, in particular employers' and workers' organisations, help to ensure public understanding and support for efforts made to meet the special needs of working parents in respect of child-care services and facilities.

IV. ENTRY AND RE-ENTRY INTO EMPLOYMENT

7. The competent authorities should take all measures in accordance with the Employment Policy Convention, 1964, and the Employment Policy Recommendation, 1964, to enable women with family responsibilities to become or to remain integrated in the labour force as well as to re-enter the labour force.

8. With a view to enabling women with family responsibilities to become integrated in the labour force on a footing of equality, and with a view to facilitating their entry into employment or their re-entry after a comparatively long period of absence, the competent authorities should, in co-operation with the public and private organisations concerned, in particular employers' and workers' organisations, take all measures that may be necessary in the national circumstances—

- (a) to ensure the provision for girls of general education, vocational guidance and vocational training free from any form of discrimination on the ground of sex;
- (b) to encourage girls to obtain a sound vocational preparation as a basis for their future work lives; and
- (c) to convince parents and educators of the need to give girls a sound vocational preparation.

9. (1) The competent authorities should, in co-operation with the public and private organisations concerned and taking account of national needs and possibilities, provide or help to ensure the provision of the services that may be necessary to facilitate the entry into employment of women who have not yet worked, or the re-entry into employment of women who have been out of the employment market for a comparatively long time, owing, in particular, to family responsibilities.

(2) Such services should be organised within the framework of existing services for all workers or, in default thereof, along lines appropriate to national conditions; they should include adequate counselling, information and placement services and provide adequate vocational training and retraining facilities appropriate to the needs of the women concerned and available without distinction as regards age.

(3) The services and facilities should be kept under review in order to ensure that they are properly adapted to the special needs of these women workers and to the changing needs and tendencies of economic and technological development.

10. (1) In the case of women who, on account of their family responsibilities arising out of maternity, do not find themselves in a position to return to their employment immediately following exhaustion of the normal period of maternity leave established by law or practice, appropriate measures should be taken to the extent possible to allow them a reasonable further period of leave of absence without relinquishing their employment, all rights resulting from their employment being fully safeguarded.

(2) In case of termination of employment following maternity, the women concerned should be considered for re-employment in accordance with the provisions applicable under the Termination of Employment Recommendation, 1963, to workers whose employment has been terminated owing to a reduction of the work force.

V. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

11. (1) To the extent necessary the public and private organisations concerned, in particular employers' and workers' organisations, should co-operate with the competent authorities and collaborate with each other to take other measures and promote other action to assist women workers to meet their employment and family responsibilities without detriment to their opportunities for employment and promotion.

(2) In this connection attention should be given, as local needs require and possibilities permit, to matters which have particular relevance for women workers with family responsibilities, such as the organisation of public transport, the harmonisation of working hours and hours of schools and child-care services or facilities, and the provision at low cost of the facilities required to simplify and lighten household tasks.

12. Particular efforts should be made to develop home-aid services operating under public authority or supervision and providing women workers with family responsibilities, in the event of family need, with qualified assistance at reasonable charge.

Resolution concerning Periodic Review of the Effects of the Recommendation
also adopted by the Conference

The General Conference of the International Labour Organisation invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to request the Director-General to review at regular intervals to be determined by the Governing Body, the first review to be made not later than 1975, the effects of the Recommendation concerning the employment of women with family responsibilities, in accordance with article 19, 6(d) of the Constitution of the I.L.O. with a view to deciding on further action within the I.L.O. to re-define the role status of women in the world of work in realistic relation to the changing pattern of employment opportunities for all workers.

Representatives of Canada (advisers) on the Committee on Women Workers of the Conference were:

For the Government: Miss Marion V. Royce, Director, Women's Bureau,
Department of Labour of Canada.

For the Employers: Mr. P. L. Schmidt, Industrial Relations Department,
Canadian Manufacturers' Association.

For the Workers: Miss Huguette Plamondon, Vice-President,
Canadian Labour Congress.

Miss Georgette Lachaine, Vice-President,
Confederation of National Trade Unions.

Comment on the Recommendation by the Government adviser in Plenary Session of the Conference:

I should first like to associate myself with other people who have paid tribute to the competence of our Chairman, our Reporter and to our two Vice-Chairmen. There was in our whole Committee an attitude of co-operation and sincere effort to produce a useful Recommendation, which we hope will be adopted by the Conference.

Impressive increase in the economic activity of Canadian women in recent years makes an I.L.O. Recommendation concerning the employment of women with family responsibilities particularly relevant to our situation. We are grateful to the Office for the comprehensive report that opened up the subject of women's work in a changing world and for the initiative in proposing the adoption of a Recommendation on this hitherto almost wholly neglected aspect of women's employment. The text submitted to the Conference in plenary sitting today will, we believe, provide a useful guide for policies and services that will facilitate the constructive development and utilization of our womanpower and that of other member countries of the International Labour Organization.

Since occupational competence is the key to effective participation in the labour force, we attach most importance to those articles of the instrument that underline the need for appropriate counselling, education and training for women who are entering or re-entering the labour market in middle life and the importance of a realistic approach to the vocational future of girls still in school.

We welcome the emphasis on public information and education based upon reliable research into essential aspects of women's employment. This type of work is a major preoccupation of the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labour of Canada.

With respect to the development of child care services and facilities, we should greatly have preferred a wording of the text that would have given the competent authorities freedom to choose between themselves organizing appropriate services and the alternative of facilitating and encouraging their establishment.

We have, however, a more significant reservation with respect to the Proposed Recommendation, resulting from the omission of any reference to part-time work. The recent increase in the employment of women in Canada, as in a number of other industrialized countries, has been accompanied by an exceptional increase in the number of part-time workers. This we find not surprising since schedules of hours that fit in with family responsibilities may enable women who would be unavailable for full-time work to enter the labour force.

We fully realize that the subject of part-time work presents special problems from the point of view of both employers and workers and that at the present time it may be irrelevant to the employment situation in most - perhaps all - developing countries. Moreover, we recognize that part-time employment may be of interest to other workers besides those under consideration in this instrument, for example, older workers, students and handicapped persons. Nevertheless, since experience has proven that it may hold particular advantages in relation to the employment of women with family responsibilities, it is with reluctance that we bow to the majority decision of the Committee on Women Workers that reference to the subject should be omitted from this instrument. Our chief concern is that since the phenomenon exists and tends to increase, recognition should be given to the need to ensure that the terms and conditions of part-time employment be such as to safeguard the position of both full-and part-time workers.

We have noted with satisfaction, however, that the whole subject of part-time employment will receive further consideration in line with the Resolution adopted by the Conference last year. Also, we hope that the review of the effects of the Recommendation ten years hence may help to clarify aspects of the question that have particular relevance to working women with family responsibilities.

Because of the dynamic nature of the development of women's work in a continually changing world, we support the proposal for periodic review of the effects of the Recommendation which we hope may be endorsed in this Session of the Conference.

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